FROM THE METEOROLOGIST-IN-CHARGE

Curtis S. Holderbach

Since winter arrived later than normal, will the same hold true for spring? That's a good question that we'll soon know the answer to. At any rate, we should all be prepared for the return of active severe weather, which so often accompanies the beginning of spring.

Protecting lives and property in severe weather is our primary mission in the National Weather Service. Even though our state of the art equipment gives us considerable severe weather information, the spotter reports will always be necessary to carry out our mission.

Please do not underestimate the importance of the severe weather information you provide. Our severe weather warnings and statements are so much more effective when real-time reports are included. If our warnings do not generate the appropriate public response, then our mission is not accomplished.

We must always strive to provide timely, accurate and comprehensive severe weather information. Together, we have worked extremely well as a team in the past, and I know we will continue to do so in the future. Thank you for your excellent support. **Your professionalism and dedication are sincerely appreciated by our staff and those we serve.**

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AMATEUR RADIO OPERATORS TALK UP A STORM....

SKYWARN Recognition Day for Amateur Radio Operators, cosponsored by the National Weather Service and the American Radio Relay League, was held November 30 and December 1, 2001; the third year for the event. About 80 National Weather Service offices around the country participated. During the special event, hams operated their radios from NWS offices and tried to contact as many other amateurs or amateur groups as possible across the country. The contacts were received and logged by the volunteer amateur radio operators.

At the Topeka NWS office, **the Kaw Valley Amateur Radio Club (KVARC)**, took part in the event for the 3rd year. About a dozen club members manned several radios for about 18 of the event's 24 hours. The club made numerous contacts and, again this year, **placed in the top ten of all NWS offices nationwide**. Highlight of this year's event in Topeka was a visit by NWS Central Region Director Dennis McCarthy who manned the KVARC radios for about 2 hours.

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WEATHER RADIO UPDATE...

A NOAA Weather Radio transmitter will be installed this spring in **Coffey county near Halls Summit**. The new transmitter will provide continuous weather broadcasts to east central Kansas, including the cities of Burlington, Emporia, Garnett, and recreation lakes at Melvern and Pomona. The transmitter will be programmed by the Topeka Weather Service office, and fills a gap in weather radio coverage.

NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts NWS severe weather watches, warnings and county specific forecasts 24 hours a day, everyday of the year.

In addition, the weather radio will broadcast other critical non-weather related hazardous information such as chemical releases, oil spills, nuclear emergency etc. Newer type digital radio receivers, available at electronic and variety stores, can be programmed to alert only for a specifically selected county or counties.

In other Weather Radio news....the Blue Rapids transmitter gifting ceremony was held November 8 at the Western Resource transmitter site in rural Marshall county. **Ownership and maintenance of the weather radio transmitter was transferred from the Marshall County Commission to the National Weather Service.** Participating in the ceremony were Dennis Mason and Terry O'Neil, coordinators of the project, and Mick Keating, Marshall County Commissioner.

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ICE STORM CRIPPLES EAST CENTRAL KANSAS....

Possibly the worst ice storm in modern times **reeked havoc and destruction** on a wide area of east-central and southeast Kansas January 29 - 31. The storms long duration, in some areas nearly 48 hours, caused a thick build up of 1 to 2 inches of ice accumulation on trees, power lines, roads and all other exposed objects.

The heavy weight of the ice tore down many miles of power lines and poles knocking out electricity to large sections of the state for several days. According to the Kansas Adjutant General Office, **419,000 Kansans lost power** sometime during the 3 day storm. In addition, Governor Graves declared a State of Disaster in many of the counties.

Hardest hit area for the freezing rain and ice accumulation reached from the Kansas City area southwest along and south of Interstate 35 into south-central and far southeast Kansas. Some of the larger local communities affected included: Ottawa, Garnett, Burlington, Emporia, and Lawrence.

The storm also produced an area of heavy snow, generally 6 to 12 inches, across north-central and far northeast Kansas, from about the Minneapolis and Abilene areas northeast to the Centralia and Hiawatha vicinities. In between the snow and heavy ice, several inches of sleet covered the ground with a lighter coating of freezing rain and ice.

The winter storm caused widespread travel problems and closed many schools and businesses across most of central and eastern Kansas. **"A stalled arctic cold front just south of Kansas was responsible for the long lasting severe winter weather", according to George Phillips, Science and Operations Officer at the Topeka NWS office.** The front allowed warm moist air to be lifted back north and over the front resulting in the variety, and long duration of precipitation. In the colder air snow fell, while in the warmer air aloft freezing rain and sleet resulted.

Year 2001 National Tornado Statistics from the NWS Storm Prediction Center

> Number of Tornadoes: 1039 (preliminary)
> Number of Deaths: 39
> Number of Killer Tornadoes: 21
> State with the Most Deaths: Mississippi (5)
> F Scale rating of Killer Tornadoes: F1 (2), F2 (11), F3 (6), F4 (2)